



H₂O Radio

Frequently Asked Questions and Answers

General Information

1. Q. What is H₂O Radio?

A. H₂O Radio is an Automatic Meter Reading System that will send a low-powered radio signal from a unit connected to your water meter. This will allow GCWW to read your water meter automatically without entering your home

2. Q. Do I have to have it installed at my address?

A. Yes. To gain maximum efficiency **all** homes and businesses that currently have GCWW water meters will have H₂O Radio installed by the end of 2007. Installation of the H₂O Radio unit is a condition of service. Eventually, if you do not contact the installation company you will receive a notice at the property that all non-essential services are being terminated. That means that if you have a service request or need a payment plan, etc. you must first schedule the installation of the H₂O Radio unit.

3. Q. Will GCWW be changing to monthly billing?

A. It is not our intention at this time to change to monthly billing. However, this new system will allow for a smoother transition to monthly billing if and when the business case warrants it.

4. Q. How long will this device work?

A. The Meter Interface Unit or MIU has a life expectancy of more than 10 years. The water meter has a life expectancy of more than 20 years.

5. Q. Who should I call for more information about H₂O Radio?

A. For more detailed information, you can contact GCWW at 513-591-7700. If you have received a notice from our contractor about the installation in your home, you should contact them at the phone number provided on the notice. (1-800-704-1720).

- 6. Q. How do you know that my reading is accurate?**
- A. One of the biggest benefits of H₂O Radio is that there is no chance for human error. The meter register is called a direct read encoder, which basically means that when a reading is required, the register is interrogated by the electronic device in the meter interface unit and the meter reading is transmitted electronically. The meter and the meter interface units have identification numbers that are stored in the computer and matched each time a reading is received.
- 7. Q. I had a touchpad installed on my house and I paid \$40.00. Can I get a refund?**
- A. Unfortunately no. You were charged for a small portion of the costs associated with installing the touchpad. This product was made available to customers as a convenience. However, the installation of the new H₂O Radio system is free and installation at your home will be easier since you already have the wire installed from the meter to the outside of your home.
- 8. Q. How will you know that you have been reading my meter and not someone else's?**
- A. Each meter interface unit or MIU is programmed at the factory with a unique ID number. This number is captured electronically by a bar code reading device at the time of installation. This information is then used to update your account record in our customer information system. When the meter is read electronically it will transmit the ID number and the meter reading making sure we are reading the correct meter.
- 9. Q. Is this automated system available for my other utility services?**
- A. You will have to contact your other service providers.
- 10. Q. What will happen to the Meter Readers?**
- A. By the end of this project we will not need Meter Readers to manually read meters as they have for over 100 years. Meter Readers are currently taking advantage of opportunities for promotions or reassignments within GCWW. As vacancies occur, we are using temporary/seasonal meter readers.
- 11. Q. My meter is outside in the ground (in a meter box). Will I still get H₂O Radio?**
- A. Yes, every water meter currently in our system will be fitted with H₂O Radio. The installation company will mail you a postcard two weeks before coming to your neighborhood. On the day of installation at your home, the installer will knock on your door and inform you that the work is to begin. Your water will be turned off for several minutes. However, you will not have to be home for the installation. When complete, the installer will leave a form on your door to indicate that the installation is complete.

Cost

12. Q. How much will it cost me?

- A. There is no additional charge for H₂O Radio. Upgrading your water meter and installing this new reading technology through the H₂O Radio Project is free.

13. Q. How much does the project cost?

- A. The total cost of the project is approximately \$38,000,000.

14. Q. Will my rates go up to pay for it?

- A. GCWW will provide and install H₂O Radio for free. Upgrading your water meter and installing this new meter reading technology is free. Over the next several years, funding of capital projects such as water main replacements and water treatment improvements may cause rates to increase. However, the efficiency and operational savings of H₂O will help GCWW to minimize increases.

15. Q. Will my water bill go up?

- A. Older meters tend to run slower and therefore do not measure all the water going through them. The new meter will accurately measure the water that you use. All new meters are tested at the factory to ensure that they register properly. If you see a higher bill, it is usually not because your new meter is over-registering; it is because the old meter was under-registering. GCWW will not back bill customers if their old meter was under-registering, but all customers with new meters will pay for their actual usage.

Installation

16. Q. Who should I call for more information about H₂O Radio?

- A. For more detailed information, you should contact GCWW at 513-591-7700. If you have received a notice from our contractor about the installation in your home, you should contact them at the phone number provided on the notice which is 1-800-704-1720.

17. Q. What work has to be done to install it at my home?

- A. Generally the Installer will locate your inside meter, remove the old meter, install the new meter and run wire along a wall or foundation. A 3/8 inch hole is needed to connect the wire from the water meter to the H₂O Radio unit which is in a 4" x 6" x 2" gray plastic case attached to the outside of your home, usually on the side of the house. Existing holes will be used whenever possible. When necessary, holes drilled in your home will be unobtrusive and properly caulked. If your meter is located outside in the ground, (in a meter box in most cases), the only noticeable change will be a new lid, complete with a flat antennae, flush with grade. The installer will clean up the area, make sure your water is turned back on and confirm that the unit is working before leaving.

18. Q. Will you have to drill holes in my walls?

- A. Yes. A 3/8" inch hole is needed to connect the wire from the water meter to the H₂O Radio unit which is in a 4" x 6" x 2" gray plastic case attached to the outside of your home, usually on the side of the house. Existing holes will be used whenever possible. When necessary, holes drilled in your home will be unobtrusive and properly caulked.

19. Q. Have you encountered any problems so far?

- A. We have already installed more than 100,000 and we have not encountered significant equipment failure, nor have we had any installation problems that were not corrected immediately. We have successfully read 99.5% of the meters installed for scheduled billing readings. That is an increase from 86% with our meter readers walking routes.

20. Q. If I have a problem after installation, whom do I contact?

- A. If you notice a problem immediately after the installation or within 30 days afterwards, you should first contact VSI Metering Service at 1-800-704-1720. If, however, you notice the problem months later or are uncertain of the timing, you should contact GCWW at 513-591-7700.

21. Q. Is your work guaranteed?

- A. Yes, our contractor's work is guaranteed for 30 days after the installation. If you find a leak near your water meter within 30 days from the date of the installation, the installer will return and make the necessary repairs.

22. Q. Why will installers need to access my home?

- A. If the water meter is located inside your home, it may have to be replaced and the H₂O Radio unit must be connected to the meter. Installation should take less than an hour.

23. Q. Will water service be disrupted?

- A. Yes, in many cases water will need to be shut off for 15 to 20 minutes so that the water meter can be replaced.

24. Q. How long will it take?

- A. In most cases if your water meter is inside your home the installation should take less than an hour.

25. Q. Do I have to be home?

- A. Yes, an adult does need to be home to let the installer in if your water meter is inside your house.

26. Q. Why do I need a new meter?

- A. Many of GCWW's meters are more than 10 years old. These older meters are not compatible with the new H₂O Radio unit.

27. Q. Will the installation damage my property?

- A. No. H₂O Radio is in a 4" by 6" by 2" gray plastic case which is attached to the outside of your home. However, if your water meter is inside your home, a 3/8" hole is needed to connect the wire from the new meter to the H₂O Radio. Existing holes will be used whenever possible. When necessary, holes drilled in you home will be unobtrusive and properly caulked.

28. Q. Can I have it installed right now?

- A. Unfortunately, no. During this project we are installing H₂O Radio on a route to route basis only. We plan to have all units installed by the end of 2007, so it won't be long before we are installing in your area. If you are having problems having your meter read, you can still call our Interactive Voice Response system at 591-7700 before noon on the day following the scheduled meter reading and enter the reading or make other arrangements for us to get inside. You may contact GCWW and we can tell you when your neighborhood is scheduled for installation.

29. Q. I have a finished basement, can this still be installed? What do I have to do?

- A. Yes, in most cases H₂O Radio can still be installed. If paneling or walls enclose your water meter, you may have to expose it so that the installer can get to it. Sometimes plaster ceilings can be a problem, but the installers are trained professionals and will do their best to install H₂O Radio in a way that is satisfactory to you. In extreme situations, we can install the meter interface unit near the water meter.

30. Q. What if we have a leak after the meter is installed?

- A. If you find your water meter is leaking within 30 days of the installation of H₂O Radio, you should contact VSI. However, if it has been more than 30 days, or you are uncertain, you should contact GCWW at 513-591-7700.

31. Q. What happens if the wires are cut?

- A. If the wires happen to be cut you should contact GCWW immediately at 513-591-7700. Our Service Representatives will make necessary repairs. However, if this happens more than once, you will be charged on the second and subsequent times for the cost to repair the damaged meter, wire or meter interface unit.

Scheduling

32. Q. Will I have to take off work?

- A. An adult does need to be home to let the installer in if your water meter is inside your house. However, there may be opportunities to schedule an appointment outside of your normal work hours.

33. Q. What hours are available and can I make an appointment?

- A. VSI, our installation contractor, will be installing H₂O Radio Monday through Friday from 8:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M. and on Saturday from 8:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. You can make a morning or afternoon appointment.

34. Q. Will they install my meter on a Saturday?

- A. Yes, VSI installs meters Monday through Saturday. Their Saturday hours are 8:00 A. M. to 4:00 P. M.

Radio Signals

35. Q. Will the radio read signals interfere with any of my other electronic devices?

- A. No. The low powered strength of the radio signal is similar to a cordless phone. It will not interfere with other phones, pacemakers, computers or other electronic devices. It complies with Part 15 of the FCC Rules which states that operation is subject to the following two conditions: (1) this device may not cause harmful interference, and (2) this device must accept any interference received, including interference that may cause undesired operation.

36. Q. How does H₂O Radio work?

- A. H₂O Radio is an electronic system comprised of a water meter, an electronic meter register, a meter interface unit (MIU) and a wire to link the two together. The meter interface unit's circuitry reads the water meter and then transmits the radio signal to a data collector (i.e. a handheld computer or a laptop computer mounted in a vehicle). The information is brought back to our offices and downloaded to our billing system. Usually a bill is generated and mailed to the customer within two business days.

37. Q. Why are we doing H₂O Radio?

- A. H₂O Radio is a proven technology used successfully throughout the United States. Customers will receive timely, accurate bills based on an actual meter reading, without the need for a meter reader to enter your home. This is more convenient for our customers and safer for our employees. GCWW is always looking at new technologies to enhance customer service and help keep our rates as low as possible.

Installers

38. Q. Who will be installing H₂O Radio?

- A. GCWW has contracted with VSI Metering Services, an installation-contracting firm. Their installers will be installing all units in the H₂O Radio project.

39. Q. Who will contact me?

- A. VSI Meter Services will contact you either by mail or phone to let you know they are scheduling dates for the H₂O Radio installation in your neighborhood.

40. Q. Will water meter readers come to my home after H₂O Radio is installed?

- A. No. A water meter reader will not have to come into your home to read your meter for your quarterly bills. In the future, a GCWW representative will drive by to obtain the reading from the H₂O Radio unit that is transmitting the reading via the radio signal. The only reason GCWW may need access to your home in the future is for maintenance for the water meter.

41. Q. How will I know the installer works for you?

- A. VSI Metering Services, our installer, will contact you prior to coming to your house, either by post card, a notice left on your door, or a phone call. You can call them to schedule a day for the installation service. They will be wearing blue uniforms, with a VSI Metering Services logo. They will carry a VSI Metering Services ID and a GCWW contractor's ID card. However, if you have any suspicion, please call 513-591-7700 and we will be able to verify if they are scheduled to be in your area.

42. Q. Do I have to be home for the installation?

- A. An adult does need to be home to let the installer in if your water meter is inside your house.

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